

**Northfield Open Space Committee
Minutes, March 18, 2014
Town Hall – Planning Board Room**

Items in italics require action prior to next meeting.

Present: Mike Barry, Jenny Tufts, Jerry Wagener

Absent: Bob Hall, Sue Ross, Joanne McGee, Kate Rossiter

Guests: Joe Stacy, Sue Handren (from the Recreation Commission), Julia Blyth

The meeting opened at 7:30. Jenny Tufts volunteered to serve as temporary secretary for the meeting.

Jerry Wagener opened the agenda with a brief recap on the Mill Brook sale to Edward Snow saying he thought the sale had been finalized in January. He was not aware of any follow-up to the community meeting convened with the Snows at the end of last year by Annie Chappell. This was followed by a short discussion of current conditions of trails in the Mill Brook/Mill Pond area.

Wagener then reported on his meeting with the Finance Committee concerning the Open Space Committee (OSC) budget request. Ray Zukowski urged the OSC to consider using the County Jail Printing Services for jobs envisioned in FY 2015. Tony Matteo and Dan Campbell suggested using CPA money for trail work but Jerry informed them that CPA monies can only be used on land that has been purchased with CPA funding. Jenny Tufts said she was not clear on that stipulation but that she understood that CPA funds did need to go toward improving and protecting the Town's investment in conservation land purchased with public funds, i.e. possibly also could be put toward trail work on Brush Mt. or in the Town Forest. Jerry said he would clarify that point with the Community Preservation Coalition.

The Finance Committee has not yet issued its decision on the OSC budget request.

The committee then moved to a discussion with the Recreation Commission guests, Joe Stacy and Sue Handren, who proposed the establishment of an Ad Hoc Community Park Committee. Stacy thought that the public discussions held during the Master Plan deliberations met the Open Space Plan requirements for a public forum on the topic of a Community Park. He suggested moving forward with a Warrant Article at Town Meeting in May to establish the Ad Hoc Community Park Committee (as per the Open Space Plan action item R.2.3.)

Although the March 4th deadline for draft Warrant Articles had passed it was hoped that the Selectmen were still able to add articles, especially since this was a non-funded article. Tufts questioned whether a town meeting vote was required to establish a committee. Stacy was of the opinion that the Town Clerk would object to any committee formed without a town meeting vote. Tufts also expressed concern that establishment of a committee might interfere with time-sensitive negotiations that might come up with NMH for land purchase.

It was proposed that the Ad Hoc Committee be formed much the same way the Town Governance Study Committee had been constituted, i.e. 2 appointed by the Rec Com, 2

appointed by the OSC, 2 appointed by the BOS, and 1 appointed by the Moderator. This would create a 7 person committee proposed jointly by the Rec Com and the OSC. The new Committee would be asked to report back to the town after one year.

A motion followed authorizing Jerry to approach the BOS at their next meeting with the request to establish an Ad Hoc Community Park Committee made up of 7 people as outlined above. [JT/MB] The motion was approved 3 in favor, 0 opposed.

The next item on the agenda was a proposal from the Chair to take action on the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company's proposal to build a pipeline from NY and PA through western Massachusetts, including part of Northfield. Landowners in Northfield with land in Conservation Restriction and/or Chapter 61 have already been contacted by the company. Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust has written Governor Patrick asking that eminent domain not be employed to put this pipeline on conservation land. Wagener presented the committee with a draft letter to the BOS in support of MGLCT's argument that protected land should not be utilized for this purpose.

Julia Blyth informed the committee that construction would most likely begin in 2017 after Federal permitting had been completed. Other towns have requested that Tennessee Gas come speak to the public. The company has said the pipeline will follow existing power lines which prompted a committee member to question whether the current expansion of the power lines in Northfield may be connected to these pipeline plans. Julia Blyth has begun working on a resolution for consideration by Town Meeting in Northfield. She also told the group that towns are allowed to hire their own surveyor to review any survey done by the gas company.

A motion was made to approve Jerry Wagener's draft letter to the BOS as amended. [JT/MB?] Motion Approved 3/0, 0 opposed.

Respectfully submitted by

Jennifer Tufts

1/6/14